

# Updates to the distribution and status of birds in Vietnam

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There is no formal list of the distribution and status of birds in Vietnam, so the value of records must largely be gauged by comparisons with the works of C. Robson. Birdwatching activity and coverage in the country remains modest, with a bias towards Tonkin and in particular the environs of Hanoi. Records are given for 65 bird species (including five Vulnerable and two Near Threatened) where it appears that the information significantly adds to existing knowledge. A few of these may involve birds released for merit or from fear of avian flu, but all warrant publication.

## INTRODUCTION

No formal records have been kept of the distribution and status of bird species in Vietnam. Robson (2005a) is the most up-to-date and publicly available reference, with significant additional records listed by Robson (2003a,b, 2004a,b, 2005b,c, 2006a,b, 2007a,b, 2008). The only Vietnamese-language field guide to the birds of Vietnam (Nguyen Cu *et al.* 2005) is largely based on an earlier field guide to the birds of Hong Kong (Viney *et al.* 1996). The distributions of most resident species are well known due to collections made during the French colonial era (e.g. Oustalet 1899, 1903, Bangs and Van Tyne 1931, Delacour and Jabouille 1931) and more recent efforts (see Tordoff 2002), while the establishment of the Vietnam Birdwatching Club in 2006 marks clear progress in public interest in birds. There are, however, currently few active birdwatchers in Vietnam and so the status or distribution of a number of species, particularly migratory ones, is unclear.

As some of the most active birdwatchers in Vietnam over the last few years, we present here those observations of PB, TDB, SD, SPM and JDP that update Robson (2005a), with contributions from AWT. Records presented here are mainly from East Tonkin, as all authors have been based in Hanoi. Vogel *et al.* (2003) also list important distributional updates for East Tonkin, none of which overlaps those listed here. It is possible that other people have also made similar observations (e.g. see Salah 2008 for photographs of some other significant records) but here we have only specifically considered the published, peer-reviewed literature. Unpublished observations by others have been added only where we are aware of them, and not collated systematically. Taxonomy and nomenclature follow Inskipp *et al.* (1996).

Although many bird species have declined markedly in both abundance and distribution in Vietnam over the last decade, it is easier to prove than to disprove presence of a species in a region. Thus, all records presented here are either new records for the biogeographic regions adopted by Robson (2005a), ‘upgrades’ to the status presented by Robson (e.g. from vagrant to passage migrant, from passage migrant to winter visitor, or from migrant/winter visitor to resident), or records of species listed as vagrants by Robson. In a number of cases, Robson lists a dual status for a species within a given region. For example, Black Kite *Milvus migrans* is listed as both a resident and winter visitor for East Tonkin. However, this is not followed consistently, e.g. Yellow Bittern *Ixobrychus sinensis* is listed only as a resident for East Tonkin, despite the fact that it is also a

passage migrant and winters in some numbers. In this paper we only list the most permanent status a species has in any region, thus for example preferring resident over winter visitor, and winter visitor over passage migrant.

Throughout, it is sadly the case that escaped (or released) cagebirds or the ‘merit release’ of birds for religious practices could cloud genuine records. Records from protected areas far from towns are no exception, owing to the misguided practice by the authorities of releasing confiscated animals in protected areas nearest the point of confiscation rather than nearest the point of capture. Nonetheless, confiscations of birds from trade are rare, and the merit release trade in Vietnam is small to date. An additional source of recent unusual records may have been the release of caged birds by owners or traders owing to fear of avian influenza or of prosecution during crackdowns on bird trade during avian influenza outbreaks (Brooks-Moizer 2007). We have already excluded a number of very unlikely records on the basis of their escape likelihood (e.g. Baya Weaver *Ploceus philippinus* in Hanoi) but believe all of the following records warrant publication for future reference. If threatened, the IUCN threat category is given after the species name.

## SPECIES LIST

### JAPANESE QUAIL *Coturnix japonica*

Listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a winter visitor and possible breeder, but the only previous recent record that we are aware of is from Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province (probably referring to a passage migrant: BirdLife International in Indochina and Xuan Thuy Nature Reserve 2002). PB, JDP and AWT collectively saw a quail species on 15 and 18 March and 22 and 24 April 2007 on an island in the Red River in Hanoi. No birds were heard calling and no breeding-plumage birds were seen, so identifications are tentatively assigned to this species rather than Common Quail *C. coturnix* on the basis of known range (Common Quail is not known to winter east of India, although there are records of vagrants from Myanmar: Madge and McGowan 2002).

### MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos*

Listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a vagrant. Up to two males and a female were observed by PB and TDB in shrimp-ponds within the buffer zone of Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province, on 6 January

2007. One male was seen by PB at Van Long Nature Reserve, Ninh Binh Province, on 18 November 2007.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER *Mergus serrator*

Listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a vagrant. One female was photographed by PB and TDB on Ha Nam Island, Quang Ninh Province, on 21 January 2007 (Robson 2007a).

EURASIAN WRYNECK *Jynx torquilla*

Not listed for North Annam by Robson (2005a), but one was observed by SD in Pu Mat National Park, Nghe An Province, on 27 December 2003.

COMMON KINGFISHER *Alcedo atthis*

Listed for Central and South Annam by Robson (2005a) only as a winter visitor. Records from Phong Nha National Park, Quang Binh Province, on 15 August 2005 by TDB and SD and 29 July 2006 by TDB and JDP, and from Yok Don National Park, Dak Lak Province, on 19 August 2006 by JDP, could be of early-returning winter visitors or may indicate that it is resident in both of these regions.

SILVER-BACKED NEEDLETAIL *Hirundapus cochinchinensis*

Robson (2005a) lists the status of this species in East Tonkin as unclear. An earlier report lists records from East Tonkin in April and May (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2004). Records of one on 10 April 1999 from Cuc Phuong National Park, Ninh Binh Province, by AWT, a few on 8 May 2004 by SD, 15–30 on 9 April 2005 by TDB, SD and AWT, two on 2 June 2006 by PB, c.10 on 1 April 2007 by PB and JDP, and 5 on 11 April 2007 by PB at Tam Dao National Park, Vinh Phuc Province, indicate that the species may be solely a passage migrant in East Tonkin, rather than a scarce resident as is now believed to be the case in West Tonkin (Robson 2004a).

ORIENTAL SCOPS OWL *Otus sunia*

Robson (2005a) lists the status of this species in East and West Tonkin as unclear. A bird seen by SD on Con Lu island, near Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province (East Tonkin), on 29 October 2005 (Robson 2006a), was certainly a migrant. Likewise, a bird found roosting in a small tree by PB in Ham Rong Gardens, Sa Pa, Lao Cai Province (West Tonkin), on 10 October 2007, was likely also to have been a migrant.

PALE-CAPPED PIGEON *Columba punicea* (Vulnerable)

Not listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a), but two records are listed by Robson (2004a) and another by Robson (2005b). Several birds, including a female seen perched at close range, were seen by SPM and JDP on Quan Lan Island, Bai Tu Long Bay, Quang Ninh Province, on 13–14 April 2008. The ecology of this species remains unclear (Gibbs *et al.* 2001), and thus it is difficult to speculate on its status in East Tonkin.

WHITE-BROWED CRAKE *Porzana cinerea*

Not listed for East Tonkin (indeed, only for Cochinchina within Vietnam) by Robson (2005a), but it appears to be resident, either having recently expanded its range into this region (Duckworth and Evans 2007) or perhaps having previously been overlooked. First recorded in East Tonkin at Van Long Nature Reserve, Ninh Binh Province, on 13 December 2003 by SD. It has since been recorded

throughout the year collectively by PB, TDB, SD, JDP and AWT, with up to seven individuals, including young birds, seen together since 17 July 2005.

WATERCOCK *Gallicrex cinerea*

Listed for East Tonkin (by Robson 2005a) as a passage migrant, but it at least occasionally oversummers. Five males and a female were observed by TDB and SD at Van Long Nature Reserve, Ninh Binh Province, on 17 July 2005 (Robson 2005c).

RUDDY TURNSTONE *Arenaria interpres*

Not listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a), but this is an oversight as Pedersen and Nguyen Huy Thang (1996) report one from Xuan Thuy National Park in Nam Dinh Province on 3 May 1996 and five from Nghia Hung on 4 May 1996. It appears to be an uncommon and local winter visitor. We have records from Xuan Thuy on 26 August 2000 (1 seen by AWT), the island of Con Lu, offshore of Xuan Thuy, on 25 April 2004 (8 seen by SD), 23 October 2004 (4 seen by SD), 29 October 2005 (1 seen by TDB and SD), 4 September 2006 (1 seen by PB, TDB and JDP; Robson 2007a), 20 February 2007 (1 seen by JDP), 6 October 2007 (10 seen by JDP), and 22 September 2007 (2 seen by PB, TDB and JDP), and Dinh Vu Island, near Hai Phong City on 21 September 2003 (1 seen by TDB and SD).

SHARP-TAILED SANDPIPER *Calidris acuminata*

Listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a vagrant. One was seen by AWT at Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province, on 23 September 2000, and a female was seen by SPM and JDP just north of Quan Lan town, Quan Lan Island, Bai Tu Long Bay, Quang Ninh Province, on 13 April 2008.

PHEASANT-TAILED JACANA *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*

Only listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a passage migrant, but it is a regular winter visitor. For example, PB, TDB, SD and JDP have collectively observed individuals at Van Long Nature Reserve, Ninh Binh Province, from September to April.

BLACK-WINGED STILT *Himantopus himantopus*

Robson (2005a) lists the status of this species in East Tonkin as unclear. It is at least a winter visitor, with widespread records from at least 19 August (2006; by PB) to 22 April (2007; by JDP).

PIED AVOCET *Recurvirostra avosetta*

Listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a vagrant. One was recorded by SD on Ha Nam Island, Quang Ninh Province, on 7 January 2006 (Robson 2006a).

COMMON RINGED PLOVER *Charadrius hiaticula*

Not listed for Vietnam by Robson (2005a), but is at least a vagrant to East Tonkin. One was seen by JDP on the Red River near Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province, on 21 February 2007 (Pilgrim *et al.* 2009).

ORIENTAL PLOVER *Charadrius veredus*

Not listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a), but Robson (2003a) lists a record of two birds at Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province, on 17 March 2003, and Robson



(2005b) lists another of two birds nearby on 29 March 2005. On Quan Lan Island, Bai Tu Long Bay, Quang Ninh Province, 14 birds, in two flocks, were seen by SPM and JDP on 13 April 2008. Two individuals, presumably remnants of these flocks, were seen by SPM and JDP the following day.

BLACK-NAPED TERN *Sterna sumatrana*

Listed for Vietnam by Robson (2005a) as a resident in Cochinchina and a non-breeding offshore visitor elsewhere, except East Tonkin. However, it appears to breed in Central Annam, at least occasionally. On 4 June 2006, SD observed c.15 catching fish at the mouth of the estuary in Hoi An, Quang Nam Province, and flying towards the Cham islands with fish in their bills.

WHITE-WINGED TERN *Chlidonias leucopterus*

Not listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a), but it is at least a vagrant there and probably an overlooked passage migrant. Five birds were seen by TDB and SD at Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province, on 6 December 2003 and another five by PB, TDB and JDP on 4 September 2006 (Robson 2007a).

BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE *Elanus caeruleus*

Not listed for West Tonkin by Robson (2005a), but it is at least likely to be a rare and local resident, with singles seen in Lai Chau Province near Tam Duong on 12 February 1998 by AWT, and 20 km west of the Tram Ton Pass, Hoang Lien National Park, on 21 July 2007 by TDB.

GREY-HEADED FISH-EAGLE *Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus* (Near Threatened)

Not listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a), but an earlier report from Ba Be National Park (Kemp *et al.* 1994), Bac Kan Province, and one immature observed by JDP at Trang An, Ninh Binh Province, on 8 September 2006, suggest it is a regular visitor or, less likely, a rare and local resident.

EURASIAN MARSH-HARRIER *Circus aeruginosus*

The taxon *Circus (aeruginosus) aeruginosus* is considered a subspecies by Inskipp *et al.* (1996) but a full species 'Western Marsh Harrier' by Robson (2005a). It is not listed for Vietnam by Robson but is a regular rare winter visitor to at least East Tonkin. At least one female was recorded by PB and JDP in the buffer zone of Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province, on 11 November 2006 and by JDP on 20 February 2007, and a male was seen there by PB and TDB on 6 January 2007; one male and one immature were seen by JDP on an island in the Red River in Hanoi on 28 January 2007; and one male was seen by PB and JDP on an island in the Red River in Hanoi on 31 March 2007. Also of note is that this species is not listed for Cambodia by Robson but one near-adult male was recorded by JDP at Kampong Trach, Kampot Province, on 16 January 2007.

GREATER SPOTTED EAGLE *Aquila clanga* (Vulnerable)

Only listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) and BirdLife International (2001) as a passage migrant, but it may be a very rare and local winter visitor, with one seen by AWT at the Thang Long bridge, Hanoi, on 12 November 2005 and one adult seen by TDB and JDP at Thai Thuy, Thai Binh Province, on 6 January 2008.

CHANGEABLE HAWK EAGLE *Spizaetus cirrhatus*

Not listed for East Tonkin, North Annam, or Central Annam by Robson (2005a), but it is probably a rare and local resident throughout these regions. A dark morph was seen by JDP at Cuc Phuong National Park, Ninh Binh Province, in East Tonkin on 14 April 2007, and apparently some weeks earlier by other observers (Le Manh Hung pers. comm.). One was seen by AWT at Phu Ninh lake, Quang Nam Province, in Central Annam on 30 July 2006. Earlier publications detail other records from Central Annam (e.g. Tran Quang Ngoc *et al.* 2001) as well as records from North Annam (e.g. Le Trong Trai *et al.* 1999a; 2001a).

AMUR FALCON *Falco amurensis*

Not listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a), but it is at least a vagrant there, and more probably an erratic passage migrant. Over Con Lu island, near Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province, TDB and SD observed at least 28 passing through on 29 October 2005 (Robson 2006a).

MERLIN *Falco columbarius*

Listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a vagrant. On Con Lu island, near Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province, SD saw a male on 6 December 2003, a female on 7 December 2003, and one individual on 1 April 2006 (Robson 2006b).

LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*

Only listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a winter visitor, but it was recorded at Van Long Nature Reserve, Ninh Binh Province, on 17 July 2005 by TDB and SD and 23 July 2006 by PB and on the Red River in Hanoi by PB on 19 and 22 August 2006 and 24 August 2007. These records may be of early returning winterers, or of non-breeding resident birds.

CHINESE EGRET *Egretta eulophotes* (Vulnerable)

Only listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a passage migrant, but it is probably a rare winter visitor. About five were seen by TDB and JDP at Thai Thuy, Thai Binh Province, on 6 January 2008.

PACIFIC REEF EGRET *Egretta sacra*

Not listed for Central Annam by Robson (2005a) but likely to be a rare resident. One dark morph bird was seen by TDB on Cham Island, Quang Nam Province, on 13 July 2007.

GREY HERON *Ardea cinerea*

Robson (2005a) lists this species as a winter visitor throughout Vietnam but a resident only in Cochinchina. It is at least occasionally present year-round in Central Annam. A single bird was seen by SD at Hoi An, Quang Nam Province, on 4 June 2006.

VON SCHRENK'S BITTERN *Ixobrychus eurhythmus*

Within Vietnam, Robson (2005a) lists this species as a passage migrant only in Central Annam, but it is at least occasionally also a migrant in East Tonkin. A female was observed by SD at Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province, on 25 April 2004 (Robson 2004b).

BLACK BITTERN *Dupetor flavicollis*

Robson (2005a) lists the status of this species in Vietnam

as unclear. It appears to be a rare breeding resident in Cochinchina (with records from PB and JDP in Cat Tien National Park, Dong Nai Province, in February, June and December, and breeding-season records by AWT from at least another eight sites); at least a rare breeding visitor to East Tonkin, with records at Van Long Nature Reserve, Ninh Binh Province, of three birds on 17 July 2005 by TDB and SD (Robson 2005c) and 13 August 2005 by AWT, and a male and a female seen together on 23 July 2006 by PB; and at least a rare breeding visitor to North Annam, for example with records by AWT from Ben En National Park in July 1997. It thus seems likely that the species is a rare breeding visitor or resident throughout Vietnam.

EURASIAN SPOONBILL *Platalea leucorodia*

Listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a vagrant. One was observed by AWT on Ha Nam island, Quang Ninh Province, on 26 January 2002 (with three Black-faced Spoonbill *P. minor*) and another by TDB and SD in Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province, on 19 January 2003.

PAINTED STORK *Mycteria leucocephala* (Near Threatened)  
Confusingly listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as both a vagrant and a (mainly winter) non-breeding visitor. This species is, rather, a non-breeding visitor in autumn (i.e., the wet season in Cambodia), with records in East Tonkin cumulatively by PB, TDB, JDP and AWT from 17 August to 7 October.

FAIRY PITTA *Pitta nympha* (Vulnerable)

Listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a passage migrant or vagrant. BirdLife International (2001) suggests it is a passage migrant in Vietnam but lists just six records. Single birds were seen in Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province, on 25 April 2004 by SD, 9 September 2007 by PB and TDB, and 23 September 2007 by PB, TDB and JDP.

BURMESE SHRIKE *Lanius collurio*

Not listed for West Tonkin by Robson (2005a), but a first spring male was listed by Robson (2005b). One presumed migrant was seen by JDP in Sa Pa town, Lao Cai Province, on 2 May 2008.

LONG-TAILED SHRIKE *Lanius schach*

Not listed for South Annam by Robson (2005a), but one individual was seen by SPM on 25 April 30 km south-west of Chu Yang Sin National Park in Dak Lak Province. Robson (2005a) notes that this species is a resident in all parts of Vietnam from Central Annam northwards, and our own observations show that there is at least some movement south in winter. The species is therefore probably a scarce winter visitor to South Annam.

YELLOW-BELLIED FANTAIL *Rhipidura hypoxantha*

Not listed for Central Annam by Robson (2005a), but one individual was seen by JDP on 9 July 2007 in Bach Ma National Park, Thua-Thien Hue Province. This is unlikely to be a resident species as the park is well visited, we know of no other records, and this would be a significant range extension. Confiscated wildlife is sometimes released in this park (JDP pers. obs.), and this record may be a consequence of such action.

ORANGE-HEADED THRUSH *Zoothera citrina*

Robson (2005a) lists the status of this species in East Tonkin as unclear. We have observed up to 20 birds on the small islands of Con Lu and Con Xanh at Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province, by SD in April 2004 and 2006 (Robson 2004b), and by PB, TDB and JDP September and October 2006 and 2007. These can only refer to passage migrants as the habitat on the islands consists of little more than *Casuarina equisetifolia*. Single individuals seen by AWT in Cuc Phuong National Park, Ninh Binh Province, on 10 April 1999 and by TDB and JDP in Tam Dao National Park, Vinh Phuc Province, on 24 September 2006, could refer to resident or migrant individuals. However, regular visits to Ba Vi National Park, Ha Tay Province, have only resulted in records of the species during migration (by PB from 5–11 October 2006, with an earlier record by SD on 26 September 2004).

BLUE ROCK THRUSH *Monticola solitarius*

Listed by Robson (2005a) as a winter visitor throughout Vietnam, and as a passage migrant in East Tonkin and resident in West Tonkin. It is likely to be at least a localised resident in East Tonkin. Two birds were observed by TDB and SD at Van Long on 17 July 2005 (Robson 2005c) and by AWT on 13 August 2005.

CHINESE THRUSH *Turdus mupinensis*

Listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a vagrant. The only previous records of which we are aware were single individuals at Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province (Scott *et al.* 1989), and an 'after-the-fact' unpublished identification from Cuc Phuong National Park, Ninh Binh Province (Bishop 2002). Subsequently, on the morning of 8 October 2006, at least three birds were seen by TDB and JDP in a thin valley of evergreen forest (between extensive bamboo forest) on the side of Tam Dao 2 peak, in Tam Dao National Park, Vinh Phuc Province.

FERRUGINOUS FLYCATCHER *Muscicapa ferruginea*

Not listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) but at least a vagrant there. A migrant adult was seen and photographed by PB, TDB and JDP on Con Lu, an island offshore of Xuan Thuy National Park (Nam Dinh Province), on 22 September 2007. An earlier record is listed from Ba Be National Park, Bac Kan Province, without details (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2004).

NARCISSUS FLYCATCHER *Ficedula narcissina*

Listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a vagrant, but it is probably a regular (if rare) passage migrant. Single males were observed in Cuc Phuong National Park, Ninh Binh Province, on 9 April 2007 by PB, and on an island in the Red River in Hanoi on 22 April 2007 by JDP, and a female was seen by TDB and JDP on the island of Con Lu, offshore of Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province. This last record was of *F. (narcissina) elisae* which, though considered a subspecies of *F. narcissina* by Inskipp *et al.* (1996), is considered a distinct species ('Green-backed Flycatcher') by Robson (2005a), and listed as a vagrant to East Tonkin. Current treatment of the taxon is summarised by Collar and Pilgrim (2007).



**BLUE-AND-WHITE FLYCATCHER** *Cyanoptila cyanomelana*  
Not listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a), but it is an uncommon passage migrant with records of up to two birds at Cuc Phuong National Park (Ninh Binh Province) on 26 October 2005 and 8 April 2007 by PB and 14 and 15 April 2007 by JDP, Xuan Thuy National Park (Nam Dinh Province) on 1 April 2006 by SD and 8, 9, 22 and 23 September and 6 October 2007 by PB, Ba Vi National Park (Ha Tay Province) on 3 April 2005 by SD, 8 October 2005 by TDB and SD, 27 October 2006 and 5 April 2007 by PB, and Tam Dao National Park (Vinh Phuc Province) on 25 March 2007 by PB. On 7 October 2007, about 10 individuals were recorded by JDP at Xuan Thuy. Moreover, for South Annam Robson (2005a) lists this species only as a passage migrant, but at least some birds may winter there: a male was recorded by JDP in the Ta Nung Valley, near Da Lat, Lam Dong Province, on 18 November 2006.

**PALE BLUE FLYCATCHER** *Cyornis unicolor*

Listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) only as a vagrant to the coast. However, records of individuals well inland in Tam Dao National Park, Vinh Phuc Province, on 21 August 2004 by TDB and SD (Robson 2004b), and Ba Vi National Park, Ha Tay Province, on 5 August 2006 by PB, TDB, JDP and AWT (Robson 2006b) and 24 August 2006 by PB, suggest that it is at least a regular scarce migrant throughout East Tonkin.

**HILL BLUE FLYCATCHER** *Cyornis banyumas*

Not listed for Central Annam by Robson (2005a), but it appears to be resident there. Several individuals were observed by TDB and JDP in Phong Nha National Park, Quang Binh Province, on 28 July 2007. An earlier report lists this species for Dakrong, Quang Tri Province (Le Trong Trai *et al.* 2001b).

**PLUMBEOUS WATER REDSTART** *Rhyacornis fuliginosus*

Listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a resident with some movements. A female seen by PB in Hanoi Botanical Gardens on 25 and 26 October 2006 is thus exceptional (Robson 2007a). Given the location, this could relate to an escaped or released individual. However, the following species is now known to undertake longer-distance movements and has been recorded in the same location.

**WHITE-TAILED ROBIN** *Mylomela leucura*

Listed for all but extreme southern Vietnam by Robson (2005a) as a resident undertaking minor movements. However, a record by PB and JDP of an exhausted female on Con Lu, an island offshore of Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province, on 12 November 2006, was at least 150 km from suitable habitat (i.e. Pu Luong Nature Reserve, Thanh Hoa Province), suggesting that—at least on occasion—longer migratory movements are undertaken. This supports the possible wild status of an individual seen in Hanoi Botanic Gardens on 3 December 2003 (Robson 2004a).

**JERDON'S BUSHCHAT** *Saxicola jerdoni*

Not listed for West Tonkin by Robson (2005a). One male and one female were seen in rocky tall grassland by PB c.25 km from Sa Pa town on the road towards Lai Chau town, on 31 October 2005 (Robson 2006b). This

is the only recent record we are aware of from Vietnam, but it is unclear whether it refers to localised residents or wintering/passage individuals.

**BARN SWALLOW** *Hirundo rustica*

Only listed as a resident/breeding visitor within Vietnam in West and East Tonkin by Robson (2005a), but it is at least a year-round non-breeding visitor, and possibly a breeding visitor, to Central Annam, South Annam and Cochinchina. Regularly recorded in some numbers in Cochinchina in June (e.g. by JDP in Cat Tien National Park, Dong Nai Province), with at least some in July (e.g. two seen by SD in Tra Su, An Giang Province). Recorded in South Annam by TDB and SD at Di Linh, Lam Dong Province, on 25 June 2005, and by SD at Mui Ne, Binh Thuan Province on 27 June 2005. Recorded by SD in Central Annam in Phong Nha National Park, Quang Binh Province, on 4 July 2004 and by TDB and SD on 15 August 2005, and by JDP in Bach Ma National Park, Thua-Thien Hue Province, Central Annam, on 13 July 2006.

**ASIAN HOUSE MARTIN** *Delichon dasypus*

Within Vietnam listed as a winter visitor only to Central and South Annam by Robson (2005a). Not surprisingly, it is at least a rare passage migrant in East Tonkin. Five or six were seen by PB, TDB, SD and AWT on Ha Nam Island, Quang Ninh Province, on 4 March 2006 (Robson 2006a).

**ASHY BULBUL** *Hemixos flavala*

Not listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) but, following prior sightings of this species at Ba Vi National Park, Ha Tay Province, on the western edge of East Tonkin in May (Robson 2004a), we can confirm that *H. f. hildebrandi* is resident there (multiple sightings by PB, TDB, JDP and AWT). The species is also known from Tam Dao National Park in East Tonkin (Davidson *et al.* 2005).

**GREY-BELLIED TESIA** *Tesia cyaniventer*

Not listed for Central Annam by Robson (2005a). A 'first record' listed by Robson (2004a) overlooks previous records from Central Annam by previous authors (e.g. Le Trong Trai *et al.* 1999b, 2000). Two birds were observed by JDP at the Lo Xo Pass, northern Kon Tum Province, on 3 March 2008. The species is presumably resident in Central Annam.

**CHINESE BUSH-WARBLER** *Bradypterus tacsanowskii*

Listed only as a winter visitor to South Annam within Vietnam by Robson (2005a), but it is at least a vagrant (and possibly winter visitor) to East Tonkin. One migrant was seen by PB, TDB and JDP on Con Lu, an island offshore of Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province, on 22 September 2007. As identification of *Bradypterus* species is complex, it was fortunate that good views were obtained for approximately 20 minutes at a range of c.5 m.

**PLESKE'S WARBLER** *Locustella pleskei* (Vulnerable)

Listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a winter visitor. Robson (2004a) lists records from December to March (1995–2003) at Xuan Thuy National Park, Nam Dinh Province. Speculative playback by TDB and JDP

revealed at least three birds at Thai Thuy, Thai Binh Province, on 6 January 2008.

**THICK-BILLED WARBLER** *Acrocephalus aedon*

Not listed for West Tonkin by Robson (2005a), but a singing bird was seen by JDP in Sa Pa town, Lao Cai Province, on 2 May 2008.

**MRS GOULD'S SUNBIRD** *Aethopyga gouldiae*

Not listed for South Annam by Robson (2005a), but this is a typographic error (C. Robson *in litt.* 2008), as *A. g. annamensis* is commonly recorded on the Dalat Plateau.

**HOUSE SPARROW** *Passer domesticus*

Only listed in Vietnam by Robson (2005a) in west Cochinchina, but one male was seen by SD with Eurasian Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus* at Binh Phuoc, on Can Gio island south-east of Ho Chi Minh City, on 23 November 2005 (Robson 2006a).

**CITRINE WAGTAIL** *Motacilla citreola*

Only listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as a vagrant, but it appears to be a regular passage migrant, at least in early spring, with up to seven recorded by PB, TDB, JDP and AWT from 17 March to 22 April 2007 along the Red River in Hanoi. Robson (2008) also lists a record of this species from Hanoi.

**BUFF-BELLIED PIPIT** *Anthus rubescens*

Not listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a). One bird (of the race *japonicus*) was observed by JDP and AWT on an island in the Red River in Hanoi on 17 March 2007 and presumably the same bird was seen nearby the following day by JDP.

**BLACK-HEADED MUNIA** *Lonchura malacca*

Not listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a), but recorded by SD on an island in the Red River in Hanoi on 3 December 2005 (20 individuals) and on Ha Nam Island, Quang Ninh Province, on 7 January 2006 (12 individuals). Regular sightings by PB, TDB, JDP and AWT suggest that these populations are now resident at both locations. These may be established populations of escaped cage birds.

**GREY-CAPPED GREENFINCH** *Carduelis sinica*

Not listed for Central Annam by Robson (2005a), but at least 10 were seen by SD at Hoi An, Quang Nam Province, on 4 June 2006 (Robson 2006a), with birds appearing to be holding territory. Robson (2008) also lists a record for Danang in Central Annam. Listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a) as of unclear status, but evidently resident, with records cumulatively by PB, TDB, JDP and AWT along the Red River in Hanoi in March, April, August and December, including adults feeding young in early April 2007.

**COMMON ROSEFINCH** *Carpodacus erythrinus*

Not listed for East Tonkin by Robson (2005a), but it appears to be a scarce winter visitor. Following records from Ba Vi National Park, Ha Tay Province, in December 2003 and February 2004 (Robson 2004a), individuals were recorded by PB in Ba Vi on 15 and 19 January 2007, by PB in Tam Dao National Park (Vinh Phuc Province) on 6 February 2007, and by TDB and JDP on an island

in the Red River in Hanoi, where there was an immature on 9 December 2006. JDP observed four birds at the latter site on 28 January 2007.

**JAPANESE GROSBEAK** *Eophona personata*

Not listed for Vietnam by Robson (2005a). A male photographed by PB on 23 November 2006 in Cuc Phuong National Park, Ninh Binh Province, was presumed to be a wild bird (Bijlmakers and Köhler *in prep.*). This record was previously reported as a Yellow-billed Grosbeak *E. migratoria* (Robson 2007a).

**BLACK-HEADED BUNTING** *Emberiza melanocephala*

Not listed for Vietnam by Robson (2005a) but at least a vagrant in East Tonkin. JDP and AWT observed two males on an island in the Red River in Hanoi on 9 April 2006 and PB, TDB and JDP watched and photographed a female on Con Lu, an island offshore of Xuan Thuy National Park (Nam Dinh Province), on 15 October 2006 (Pilgrim *et al.* 2009).

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